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The Not So Digital Divide: Bringing Pre-service English Teachers' Media Literacies into Practice

Melissa Schieble

School of Education, Hunter College, City University of New York, New York, NY, USA

Abstract

In this article, the author demonstrates how pre-service English teachers applied their own out of school media literacy practices (e.g. participation in social network sites and practices associated with remix) to their developing teaching practices. This research is informed by a growing body of work in media literacy that theorizes the important connections between youths' out of school media lives and their in school literacy learning. The author aims to address an area that may be further developed in this regard: how pre-service teachers might connect their own out of school media literacies to their in school learning in teacher education. Such connections provide opportunities for pre-service teachers to experience and demonstrate the applicability of media literacy with the youth they intend to teach.

Keywords: multimodality, pre-service teacher education, reading, adolescent literature

A substantive and growing body of research exists documenting adolescents' out of school literacy practices that engage multiple forms of media (Alvermann and Hagood 2000; Black and Steinkuehler 2009; Chandler-Olcott and Mahar 2003; Goodman 2003; Guzzetti and Gamboa 2005). These studies capture a myriad of activities in which adolescents leverage digital tools to build and maintain social communities and to use literacy as a creative tool for personal expression. Researchers undertaking this work have been instrumental toward hypothesizing how adolescents' out of school literacy practices may inform literacy instruction.

Research on adolescents' out of school literacy practices also is significant in highlighting that these practices are largely absent in school. Donna Alvermann (2008) suggests that this grave disconnect leaves her wondering "how young people who are immersed in complex digital worlds tolerate...[educators] insistence on reading and writing linear texts devoid of hyperlinked multimodal content and opportunities for social networking" (14). I extend this thinking to include pre-service teachers—a group mostly in their early twenties and also active consumers and producers of digital texts in networked communities. Less empirical research is available on how pre-service teachers build on their own digital lives to inform their emerging

practices as literacy teachers. Like today's adolescents, pre-service teachers undergo teacher preparation that is largely devoid of the multimodal and networked practices they engage with in their out of school lives. Alvermann suggests that:

Regardless of how much we, as teachers and teacher educators...admire the writing skills, inventiveness, and social intuitions exhibited by adolescents who create online content, these markers of student expertise are given scant attention in our everyday classroom practices, at the postsecondary level as well as the middle and secondary levels. (13)

In this article, I describe and interpret how a small group of pre-service English teachers in one teacher education program capitalized on their own media literacy practices (e.g. participation in social network sites such as *Facebook* and remix) to inform their developing teaching practice. Knobel and Lankshear (2008) define remix as "to take cultural artifacts and combine and manipulate them into new kinds of creative blends" (22). This research responds to a branch of study within the field of adolescent literacy that focuses on how adolescents interact with digital forms of text in their everyday lives (see Black and Steinkuehler 2009) and how educators may learn from these practices to engage students

in the classroom. I extend this work to examine how pre-service teachers, who themselves were adolescents during the time that much of the current research was undertaken, merged the media literacy practices they engage with in their social and academic circles as resources to inform their literacy teaching. I conclude this article with implications for bringing media literacy into teacher preparation. Such connections provide opportunities for pre-service teachers to experience and demonstrate the applicability of media literacy with the youth they intend to teach.

Media Literacy and Instruction

Within the field of literacy instruction, teachers and researchers have taken up the call to connect students' in school literacy learning to their out of school media literacy practices. Rozema and Webb (2008) document the use of electronic communication (e.g. email, blogs, podcasts and discussion boards) and virtual worlds for facilitating literature-based discussions. Several studies have captured the effects of peer-based, on-line discussion forums for facilitating problem solving (Wade, Fauske and Thompson 2008) and as spaces that may facilitate critical discussion of literature (Groenke 2008; Scharber 2009). Alvermann (2006) examined the use of email communication for literacy teaching and learning involving popular culture texts and rap music; researchers have suggested wikis as a tool to promote a collaborative approach to writing instruction (Luce-Kapler 2007; Morgan and Smith 2008) and cite internet resources useful for reading instruction (Wasburn-Moses 2006). I add to this body of empirical work by focusing on pre-service teachers' use of social network sites and remix practices to inform their literacy teaching.

Given the highly integral nature of social network sites as an out of school media literacy practice, and the fact that the access to these sites is predominantly banned in schools, research on the impact of these sites on literacy teaching and learning is nascent. Most research on social network sites resides outside the field of education and provides insight on how users craft and manage their identities, and on issues related to privacy (e.g. boyd 2007; Gross and Acquisti 2005; Stutzman 2006). While researchers have begun to explore questions regarding the nature and complexities of these sites on behavioral and social practices, re-

search on the use of these sites for literacy teaching and learning is minimal, particularly when considering pre-service teachers. I ask the following questions to guide this inquiry:

- (How) do pre-service English teachers' bridge their out of school media literacies with their in school learning about teaching practice?
- What effect might these connections have on pre-service teachers' understandings about the role of media literacy in English teaching?

Research Context and Participants

Data from this paper is part of a larger qualitative study of fifteen English teacher candidates teaching young adult fiction through Moodle—an open source, web-based software for creating virtual classrooms. The virtual teaching experience was part of a semester long project in a course on young adult literature taught at Lakeshore University in 2008 of which I was the instructor (the names of all institutions, geographic locations and people have been changed). Lakeshore University is a large, public university in a mid-sized city in the Midwestern United States. The purpose of the project was to provide a virtual field experience for the pre-service teachers to practice teaching literature using digital sources and media literacy practices (e.g. blogging, posting to discussion forums and remix with audio and visual texts). Working in pairs, the pre-service English teachers selected a young adult (YA) novel of their choice, developed curriculum and materials for a unit based on their selection, and implemented their unit through Moodle with a small group of adolescents from Leigh Hills High School (LHHS). LHHS is a mid-sized, suburban public school located close in proximity to Lakeshore University.

The virtual teaching project was part of a collaboration between the pre-service teachers and two sections of an elective English course at LHHS. This site was chosen because of a professional relationship that I had with the English teacher for both sections of the elective course. The LHHS students participated in the project to experience reading texts that focused on teen issues, and to practice reading and writing about these texts in ways that connected to their out of school media literacy practices. Each Moodle classroom comprised an average of two pre-service teachers and four LHHS students; participants engaged with one another through their Moodle classroom for a period of three weeks in late Spring of 2008.

LHHS students were able to choose one of four YA novels selected by the pre-service teachers; they were required to read the novel, browse supplemental readings and videos linked on Moodle, and complete all media activities posted by their teachers. The minimum participation requirements for LHHS students were to complete all activities and post to the discussion forum a minimum of two times per week. The four young adult novel selections included *Sold* by Patricia McCormick, *American Born Chinese* by Gene Yang, *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky, and *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time* by Mark Haddon.

The pre-service teachers and LHHS students met face to face on two occasions: 1) on the first day of the three week virtual collaboration to discuss the YA novel, how to navigate Moodle, and to talk over expectations, and 2) for one hour in the third week of the unit to take part in a writer's workshop for the final assessment component of the project. The final assessment took the shape of a multigenre paper (Romano 2000) that both pre-service teachers and LHHS students contributed to based on an agreed upon theme. For example, the group that read *Sold* chose shame and hope as their uniting theme, and each group member created a piece of writing, representing different genres, that was then put together as a whole paper and uploaded to Moodle. Writings for this multigenre paper included lyrical vignettes (similar to the style with which this book was written), a screen-play and an excerpt from an Instant Messenger chat between two characters from *Sold*. Further discussion of methods for generating data for the study next is provided.

Data Generation

Case study methodology (Stake 2005) was used to generate data to address the research questions. Case study is a method of qualitative research that "concentrates on experiential knowledge of the case and close attention to the influence of its social, political, and other contexts" (444). Data was generated as part of an intrinsic case study, in which primary interest lies in the dynamics of one particular case, rather than to "re-draw a generalization" (445). As research on teaching and learning in virtual spaces is highly dependent on knowledge of online and offline contexts (Leander and McKim 2003), conducting this research for the purpose of drawing grand generalizations is a problematic endeavor. While I am interested in the particularities of this case, I acknowledge that similar findings may be

redrawn from relative empirical work.

Data for the case was generated through document collection; audio-taped discussions of pre-service teachers' early planning sessions; a collection of archived, web-based transcripts from the Moodle sites; and six semi-structured focus group interviews conducted at the end of the project (once grades had been posted). Documents collected included a group planning paper that pre-service teachers wrote early in the semester detailing their selected young adult novel, a justification for its use in the classroom, unit objectives, a teaching plan that was supported by course readings, and adherence to state standards. Throughout the three weeks of virtual teaching, pre-service teachers kept a teaching journal that was collected and photocopied. At the end of the semester, the same small groups completed a final paper addressing how unit goals and objectives were met. The final paper, and all handouts related to their teaching, were collected and photocopied.

Transcripts of the pre-service teachers' and adolescents' web-based interactions were archived for each of the seven Moodle classrooms that were created for the project. Data from these sites included postings to the discussion forum, uploaded word documents and photos, links to external Internet sites, and uploaded PowerPoint documents. This data was housed in a password-protected database administered by Lakeshore University's instructional technology department.

To gain an extensive understanding of the contexts surrounding the project and the web-based interactions, I conducted a series of focus group interviews immediately following completion of the project. The focus groups were conducted with both adolescents and pre-service teachers who volunteered to share their insights with me. A pre-determined set of semi-structured interview questions were made available to participants before the interviews took place. Each focus group lasted approximately one hour, and interviews were audio taped and transcribed. Focus group participants created their own pseudonyms for reference.

Data Analysis

Qualitative analysis procedures based on the constant comparative method (Strauss and Corbin 1998) were applied across the data set through inductive and deductive coding methods. As part of the larger qualitative study, data initially was categorized by codes that addressed ways that pre-service teachers applied digital tools in literacy instruction. These codes included tools leveraged through Moodle (e.g.

linked video) and instructional strategies for teaching literacy (e.g. text to self, text and world connections). Inductive codes were applied to deductive categories to create sub-themes that emerged from an initial reading across the data record. Inductive codes included tools such Facebook as a recurring factor in both pre-service teachers' and students' ways of communicating in their social worlds, and media literacies such as remix as a tool for designing literacy instruction. Inductive codes supplied categories that were used to generate themes to address the research questions.

Social Network Sites as Part of Preservice Teachers' Out of School Lives

Among focus groups conducted with pre-service teachers, social network sites such as *Facebook* emerged as a regular part of their out of school media literacy practices. The pre-service teachers I interviewed indicated that they regularly connect their out of school media literacy practices associated with *Facebook* to their in school lives as pre-service teachers. The following comments from four pre-service teachers (Jennifer, Michelle, Anne and Lisa) exemplify how these pre-service teachers use Facebook toward supporting their academic work at Lakeshore University:

A: We have a Facebook group for [a small group of us taking the same classes] in English, so when we have group projects, we can say, okay Kristen you're going to bring this, and Jennifer's gonna do this, it has a nice funny picture of Professor [Nolan] as our little picture of our group...we are all intense in the school of ed and want to do well and get a good grade, [so] we would use [Facebook] for that.

In this instance, EED students merged their out of school media literacy practices for the purposes of academic achievement in school. This collaboration was prompted by the EED students themselves, and as one of their course instructors, I had no knowledge of their use of Facebook for small group work until this was revealed in our focus group discussion. The following section of this article turns toward how the pre-service teachers merged their participation in social network sites and other media literacy practices such as remix as resources for developing their literacy teaching practices.

Facebook as a Tool for Teaching and Learning

The pre-service teachers leveraged their out of school media literacies to inform their developing teaching practices in several ways. For the purpose of this article, I focus on their participation in Facebook and remix practices related to this site as salient examples of media literacies that informed their literacy teaching. I present two examples from the data set chosen for their richness in articulating the potential in connecting pre-service teachers' out of school literacies for teaching and learning. I describe these examples through vignettes to capture the larger context of these literacy practices. The data next presented concerns two works of young adult fiction: *Sold* and *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*.

"Remixing" and "Recreating" Images from Young Adult Literature

Sold is a young adult novel by Patricia McCormick that is told through a series of lyrical vignettes; the story is narrated by Lakshmi, a young girl from a mountain village in Nepal who is sold into sexual slavery due to drought and her stepfather's gambling addiction. Lakshmi narrates her journey from the mountain village of Nepal to the city, where she is forced to live in a brothel and work off her debt through sexual exploitation. Eventually, Lakshmi is released from her bondage by a United States aid worker.

Anne and Lisa, two pre-service teachers that partnered together to create a Moodle classroom based on *Sold*, used *Facebook* as a tool to engender new literacy practices and to bring their out of school literacy interactions with Facebook into their teaching. Alvermann (2008) states that,

Young people are tirelessly editing and remixing multimodal content they find online to share with others, using new tools to show and tell, and rewriting their social identities in an effort to become who they say they are. (10)

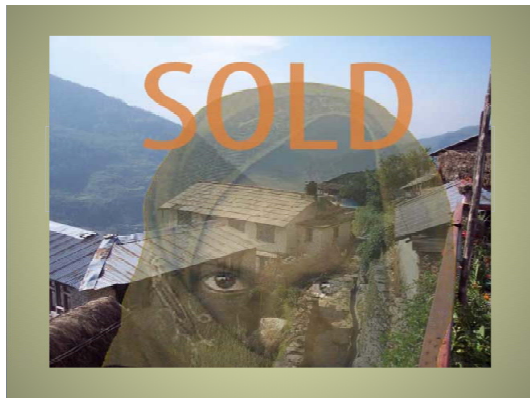
In week one, Anne and Lisa created and uploaded a PowerPoint to Moodle to build students' awareness of Nepal and to give "students a view of Lakshmi's world" (Anne personal communication 2008). Anne and Lisa used Facebook as a tool to remix and recreate digital texts for the purposes of building their students' prior knowledge about life in Nepal. Anne had a friend who recently studied abroad in Nepal and India and had posted his photos to his Facebook page. Connecting her own social perusal of her friend's trip photos

to her teaching, Anne called her friend and asked for his verbal permission to download the photos from his Facebook page. Anne described this experience in our interview:

A: We got the pictures from my friend [Chris's] Facebook, we asked him first,... I just called him and said, "Hey, Lisa and I are in the teacher library, you have these really cool pictures, can we use them?"...and we had our images in five minutes. Whereas Lisa's brother had studied abroad with Chris, which is kind of weird, and all of his pictures were in a photo album in [their hometown]. We didn't even bother to ask Lisa's brother, because they were a half hour away in non digital form.

Anne and Lisa remixed these digitally downloaded photos from Facebook into a PowerPoint slide show that visually depicted the order of events in the novel. Anne and Lisa's first slide transposed the book cover onto a picture from Chris's Facebook photos:

Figure 1: Book Cover



A: I photoshopped a real picture of a Nepali village that my friend Chris took when he went to Nepal and India for a year, so I took one of his pictures and then I photoshopped the actual girls face from the book onto it... I wanted to have a theme that was connected to the book so we were using her face and then have a picture so that you could get an idea of where she is coming from.

Figure 2: Journey to the City



Anne and Lisa also used images from Facebook to recreate Lakshmi's journey from her village to the city:

A: There is one scene [in the book] where there is a donkey and it is loaded up with stuff and its headed toward the mountains and we thought it was very symbolic of her journey, because she had to go through the mountains with all this stuff...

Figure 3: City View



and eventually they get to, one of [Chris's pictures] is a city, and so, we made ours like an arching theme of her journey to the city.

Anne and Lisa used the PowerPoint of images from Facebook to support LHHS students' comprehension during this first week of instruction. By remixing and recreating these Facebook photos to follow the linear pathway of events as they unfold in the novel, Anne and Lisa hoped to foster students' predictions. Anne and Lisa posted the following question on the Moodle discussion forum to juxtapose students' viewing of the PowerPoint with the novel:

1. *Make predictions about what awaits Lakshmi in the city. Use quotations from Sold and the pictures in the PowerPoint presentation to support your ideas. Don't worry about being right or wrong, this is just to get you thinking about the text.*

The LHHS students were able to use these images to assist in making predictions about events toward the end of the novel. The first LHHS student to respond to the question predicted that Lakshmi will be frightened of the life that awaits her in the city. The student explained that the pictures from the slide show of rural mountain life placed in contrast with the image of a crowded and overwhelming city led her to make these predictions in the narrative.

From this example, Anne and Lisa's participation in social network sites and media literacy practices associated with remix informed their ideas about teaching comprehension. I asked Anne and Lisa if these photos enhanced their own connections to the book, and Anne related that, "it definitely made us see them more...we were triggered by seeing these really beautiful pictures that [Chris] took and we were like, "oh that really reminds us of this passage." In this instance, Lisa and Anne demonstrate how they bridged tools and practices associated with their out of school media lives toward their in school learning about literacy teaching.

The Multigenre Project: Social Network Sites and Character Development

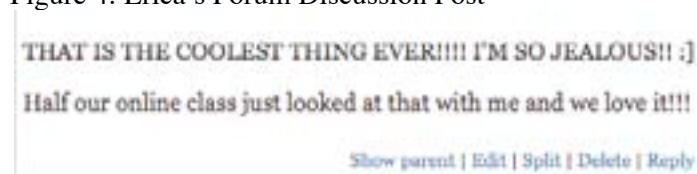
Michelle, a pre-service teacher, created a Moodle classroom with two of her peers based on the young adult novel, *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, by Stephen Chbosky. *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* is a young adult novel based on the main character, Charlie, who is a freshman in high school. Readers learn of Charlie's struggles with identity and being outside the popular crowd through anonymous letters he writes to a friend. For the final multigenre project, the LHHS and EED students agreed on the relationship between love and friendship as a unifying theme. The LHHS students explored variations on this theme in the form of "a scrapbook, recipes, paparazzi photos, letters to the main character, a collage, and an updated letter from the main character's perspective years after the book ends" (Michelle's final paper 2008). Michelle remixed and recreated media based on her participation in Facebook to create her multigenre piece based on this theme. The main character of the novel, Charlie,

is a mysterious and somewhat reclusive character. To explore his identity further, Michelle copied and pasted a Facebook profile into a Word document, and remixed and recreated this profile to reflect Charlie's character (see Appendix A). She posted the Word document to the discussion forum on Moodle, which also included a rationale for the multigenre piece:

Facebook has become the new way for students to socialize. It serves as a place to make new friends, keep old ones, find people with similar interests, and create a page that represents you as a person. You can put as much or as little information as you want. This Facebook was made after reading The Perks of Being a Wallflower. I created it for Charlie who, after Sam and Patrick leave, is going to need a new space to participate and make new friends. It is a way for Charlie to make connections with his peers that he may not feel comfortable doing face to face. The information I used comes directly from the pages of Perks and gives a snapshot of who Charlie is, what his likes and dislikes are, and the growth he has made since beginning his freshman year of high school.

Once Michelle posted Charlie's Facebook page to the Moodle classroom, it was an instant point of interest among LHHS students. Erica, one of the LHHS group members reading *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, posted the following comment as a reply to Michelle:

Figure 4: Erica's Forum Discussion Post



Erica's post clearly demonstrates the interest among LHHS students in viewing this remixed media design that connects their reading to popular out of school media literacy practices. She uses all upper case letters and the emoticon of a smiley face to signal that Michelle's piece was creative and meaningful. Erica also comments that she is "jealous" of Michelle's multigenre piece. The use of the word "jealous" has certain connotations, that maybe Erica is envious that Michelle had the freedom to bridge her out of school literacy practices with those in school, a freedom that perhaps Erica and her peers do not share. Erica's excitement at this merging of media literacy practices also is evi-

dent in her recruiting “half our online class” to look at Charlie’s Facebook page, which prompted discussion and excitement with making meaning with their book. Michelle wrote about how the virtual teaching project solidified the importance of bringing students’ media literacies into the classroom in her final reflective paper for the project:

One thing the online classroom environment provides is opportunities to bring in more technology and help students make connections between the technology they use in their daily lives to what they are doing in the classroom. In this day of information and technology, an online classroom links the classroom with the technology students are using in their lives outside of school (final paper 2008).

Through experiencing success merging her own media literacy practices with her teaching, Michelle validated the importance of recreating these opportunities for her current and future students.

Implications for Media Literacy and Pre-service Teacher Education

Implications for media literacy education hinge on both the strengths and limits of the research methods. The study design allowed for analysis of multiple qualitative data sources with which I was able to construct an information rich case study revealing how pre-service teachers’ out of school media lives informed their teaching practice. While these findings are limited to one teacher education program and the practices of a small sample of pre-service English teachers, the vignettes provide teacher educators insight into this important issue. Such insight suggests teacher educators construct opportunities for pre-service teachers to bring the media literacies they use outside of school to their coursework and their classroom practice across multiple contexts. Limits to the study also include how my involvement as the course instructor may have formed participants’ actions and attitudes throughout the project. For example, as a teacher and researcher interested in media literacy and the application of digital tools for teaching and learning I include readings and resources on my syllabus that facilitate students to think about these issues. My involvement may have shaped pre-service teachers to produce writing in multiple formats (such as the Facebook page for Charlie).

Social network sites such as Facebook may serve as invaluable tools for teacher educators to encourage collaborative approaches to building knowledge. Facebook harbors immense potential for connecting current inservice and former pre-service teachers, cooperating teachers and university professors belonging to one program, or sharing information across programs. As an important networking opportunity, students may digitally showcase and share teaching units they have created, post questions, reflect on their peers and cooperating teachers’ teaching practices and link innovative teaching ideas from internet resources. In doing so, pre-service teachers have access to information sharing tools and important mentoring opportunities from other cooperating teachers and their university professors. Facebook allows for these networks to continue beyond enrollment in a university course or program, unlike most web-based tools available at universities such as Blackboard, where participation requires course enrollment and is time sensitive. Kist (2008) found in his interviews with pre-service teachers on the benefits of social network sites that “they provide groups where you can meet people with similar interests” (46). In addition to social network sites, pre-service teachers may create digital poems, blog or compile digital narratives of their teaching through iMovie to engage with their coursework. Such practices may provide opportunities for pre-service teachers to experience the connections between their own media literacy lives and their developing ideas about teaching practice. As is the case with Michelle, these experiences provide a lens for understanding the power in connecting youths’ media literacies with in school learning.

The current reality involving any discussion of teaching and learning through media such as Facebook and YouTube is that student and teacher access to these tools, and thus the media literacy practices associated with using these tools, is denied in many schools. Rosenfeld (2008) suggests that “blanket blocking of Web 2.0 sites by district and school technology administrators prevents the effective use of technology in teaching [and] the acquisition of vital 21st century literacy skills” (6). While it is understandable that district administrators decisions to block these sites is with students safety in mind, this practice also communicates the idea that how students use literacy as a social practice outside of school has no place *in school*. Rosenfeld also asserts that, “too many schools prevent students from using the tools that these same students use outside school-tools that can engage and excite them to

meaningful learning” (6). It was the case in the current study that LHHS students were unable to access both YouTube and Facebook at school; therefore, pre-service teachers such as Michelle had to work around this issue and create a Facebook profile for Charlie in a Word document – preventing full use of the tools available through Facebook for students to “interact” with Charlie’s character. The LHHS students’ intense interest in Michelle’s adaptation of a Facebook profile (by recruiting half the class to read and comment on her multigenre piece) suggests the potential engagement virtual spaces such as Facebook may facilitate. Bringing these tools into the classroom could also facilitate discussion on consequences related to safety and privacy when using a public space such as Facebook or writing blogs. I wish to avoid asserting, however, that meaning making in these examples is solely attributable to any tool such as Facebook. Rather, the collaborative aspect of Facebook that promotes users to represent the multiplicities of one’s identity through print, images, video and audio allows for greater reflection of self and opens up new spaces for building ideas. Participants’ collaborations across space and time and intersections of diverse viewpoints account for deeper engagement with materials and ideas.

In addition to connecting pre-service teachers’ out of school media literacy practices to coursework, as teacher educators we have opportunities to apply digital media to connect high school students directly with teacher preparation. These opportunities may include having pre-service teachers design their own virtual classrooms and facilitate activities and assessments as described in this study. Additional project ideas may consist of pre-service teachers and adolescents’ participation in web-based discussion forums to discuss a work of literature or video-based chats to revise a piece of writing.

An important aspect of application of media literacy for teaching and learning is for teachers (and teacher educators) to step back, support and encourage students to be inventive and creative with such tools. The full learning potential of these practices may be developed and captured by these generations of students themselves, who intricately use these tools in their everyday lives and foster creative applications beyond what a teacher (or teacher educator) epistemologically may conceive. Part of the solution to this dilemma is for schools (K-12 and higher education) to continue to support access to digital tools and to legitimize pre-service teachers’ and students’ creative capacities to engage with these tools.

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Appendix A

facebook Profile Friends Inbox home account privacy help

Search



View Photos of Me (12)
View Videos of Me (0)
View My Friends (5)
Edit My Profile

Charlie
Charlie is writing a letter to you.

Network: Participate H.S.
Sex: Male
Interested in: Women
Relationship Status: Single
Looking For: Friendship

Mini-Feed
You have no recent activity.

Information

Contact Info
Email: Charlie@participate.k12.pa.us
Current Town: Hometown, PA

Personal Info

Groups
I Like Reading...And Not Just Off the Syllabus, A Rocky Horror Picture Show Cult, Catcher in the Rye is the best book ever!, Why don't we write letters anymore?, I'm a wallflower, Mixed Tapes Forever, Grandparents are the best!!!, Street Self Defense, I probably shouldn't have my drivers license, What is friendship?, M*A*S*H 4077...

Bumperstickers

so i kinda sorta maybe like you a LOT more than i had originally planned.
no regrets just lessons learned

I PUT THE FRESH ON FRESHMAN
Memories are only as good as the people you make them with.

Activities: I don't really participate in school sports
Interests: I like to read A LOT. My teacher is always giving me new books to read and the ones that I really like I read over and over again. I also like to write letters. It helps me to get out my feelings and cope with what's going on in my life.
Favorite Music: I have a lot of favorite songs, here are some of them: Asleep (The Smiths), Blackbird (Beatles), Scarborough Fair (Simon & Garfunkel), Smells like Teen Spirit (Nirvana), MLK (JZ), Landslide (Fleetwood Mac)
Favorite TV Shows: Whenever my brother is on TV playing football, I like watching him because it brings my family together. I also like the show M.A.S.H. because it's one of my Dad's favorite shows and we watched the final episode together as a family.
Favorite Movies: This would be obvious to those people who are my friends but to those of you who don't know me yet, my favorite movie has got to be The Rocky Horror Picture Show. My friends and I go to this theater and act out the show. We have a really great time and it's a way for us to spend time together and have some laughs.
Favorite Books: This list is constantly changing. Whenever I read a new book it seems to become my new favorite. Here's a list of some of the books that I read this semester for my teacher Bill. Catcher in the Rye, Peter Pan, To Kill a Mockingbird, This Side of Paradise, The Great Gatsby, The Fountainhead, Walden, etc. Like I said, there are a lot more that I could add. If you ever have any books that can recommend I would love to read them.
Favorite Quotes: "We accept the love we think we deserve." -Bill
"Don't ever tell anybody anything. If you do, you start missing everybody." -Catcher in the Rye
"Give yourself over to absolute pleasure. Swim the warm waters of sins of the flesh - erotic nightmares beyond any measure, and sensual daydreams to treasure forever. Can't you just see it? Don't dream it, be it." -Frank, Rocky Horror Picture Show
About Me: My name is Charlie. I would describe myself as one of those guys who likes to sit behind the scenes and watch life go by. This year was my first year of high school and it started off kind of rocky but after meeting my friends Sam and Patrick I've started what my teacher Bill would call "participating" in my life. I do like to meet new people. I may seem shy at first but after awhile I become more comfortable. This school year my goal is to keep on participating despite Sam and Patrick being away from school. It's a new year and a new day. I'm ready for it.